

and for our neediest seniors. And that's why we're here; absolutely, that's why we're here. We don't want you to do that. We don't want you to hurt the seniors, the 3.5 million, a part of the 8 million that get their Medicare through that Advantage option, because most of those seniors, Mr. Chairman, most of those seniors are our poorest seniors. They're in that category of income from \$10,000 to \$20,000. And those are the people who you are pushing off the Medicare program of choice, their program of choice.

So anywhere we can find cuts, this amendment, the second-degree amendment, further amendments that we're going to offer, that's what we ought to do if we're going to have this massive increase in spending, which our side of the aisle feels like we should not do.

Now, we could go home in August, Mr. Chairman, and say, on Thursday or Friday of this last week that we were in session, before the long break, the Democrats have destroyed Medicare for 3.5 million low-income seniors, and they've said they've done it in the interest of providing health care for children. But which children are we talking about?

In their bill that's coming to the floor, with a closed rule, that we won't have an opportunity to amend, they want to cover children up to 400, maybe even more, the sky is the limit, 400 percent of the Federal poverty level, \$82,000 a year for a family of four or maybe it's 500 percent or 600 percent. So what happens? Ninety percent of these children already have private health insurance. And so that's why we're here, and I support the second-degree amendment of the gentleman from North Carolina.

Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey. I move to strike the last word.

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey. Mr. Chairman, I too join in supporting this amendment, and the gentleman from North Carolina for doing it, for saving so much money for the American taxpayer.

Just prior to this we heard the chairman from the other side of the aisle, in essence, asking us in some ways to trample on our free speech rights in this House. And you know, when you do that, when you ask that we not speak on important issues here in this House for hours, for a period of time, and the other side of the aisle always points out that we're spending more time this year than we did in the past years trying to debate these issues. And I think the American public, quite honestly appreciates that, whether it's 86 hours or 186 hours. I think the American public looks to Congress to make sure that we spend their money appropriately, and looks for us to debate those issues appropriately as well.

We, each Member of Congress, as we stand here, represents a little over 600,000 individuals, men, women and children, across this country in our re-

spective districts. When we come to this floor and speak on this floor, we are representing their voices. We bring their voices from New Jersey to this floor.

And so when the other side of the aisle says, oh, you go on too long over there in the minority, well they're saying that really to my constituents. They are complaining that my constituents' voice should be silenced. And I come to the floor right now and say, no, sir, my constituents voices will not be silenced. I will speak out when I can, where I can on behalf of the constituents of the Fifth District and the State of New Jersey as well.

Now, I know that we're looking at a bill here with \$18.6 billion. Right now we're looking at an amendment for \$100,000. To us, and my constituents, that's a lot of money. And if it takes us an hour or two hours to debate this one amendment, to get consensus to save \$100,000, well, that's a lot of money to my constituents, and they would say that hour or two hours of debate is well worth it.

Now, maybe the other side of the aisle will disagree with me. Maybe the other side of the aisle doesn't care whether we spend 50,000, 100,000 of our hard-earned tax dollars. And maybe they will accept the amendment as they did in the past, and if they do so, the \$100,000 amendment, we appreciate that.

But you know, in that regard, this really is a bipartisan effort then. It is really two parties coming together to solve a problem. The one party, the majority party, comes to this floor, raises our taxes, increases our spending.

The minority party, the Republicans, equally come to the floor, and we reach out our hand and work together. While the Democrats raise our taxes and raise the spending, we reach out a hand and say how about trying to bring that spending down just a little bit by \$100,000, and by bipartisan effort we're able to get that down. So this is a bipartisan day, and I hope that we will see other amendments to increase that bipartisanship as well, as we try to rein in the spending that the other side has brought us.

And when we talk about what the other side has brought us, and one of the reasons why we need to save this \$100,000, just think of what we've gone through in the last few months already and just recently in the last couple weeks. We have seen taxpayers on the American taxpayers go up by over \$400 billion in one of the first bills that House passed under the majority party of their budget.

We have seen just recently them raising taxes again through the farm bill. And now with this underlying bill that we'll be looking at in a little bit on the SCHIP bill, another \$60 billion in taxes.

And let me add just one more tax increase that maybe Members of both sides of the aisle may be forgetting about. Just a few hours ago, as I look

at the clock, I came out of Financial Services Committee, where we, or the majority party, added the last piece to the puzzle with regard to another tax increase on the American public, and that's the MTI. That's the mortgage tax increase. That's a tax increase on every family in America who needs to go out and get a mortgage to buy their first home or their second or an additional home as they move into it.

Every family in America who will want to get out a mortgage in the future will now have to pay an MTI, a mortgage tax increase, thanks to the majority party in the legislation that is just finally put in place. So whether it is an increase in the budget taxes or the farm bill or the SCHIP or now an MTI as far as a tax increase as well, we're working with the other side of the aisle. As they raise taxes on the American family, we work with them here and there, to bring down the spending to a level that our taxpayers in our districts are able to abide by.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BARTON of Texas. Mr. Chairman, I move to strike the requisite number of words in support of the McHenry amendment.

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BARTON of Texas. Mr. Chairman, I want to rise in support of the McHenry amendment. And I want to compliment the subcommittee chairwoman, Ms. DELAURO, for her openness and bipartisanship in preparing the ag appropriation bill and working with Ranking Member KINGSTON.

I asked Mr. KINGSTON, I said, have y'all held hearings on the bill? He said, yes, we held lots of hearings. I said, did you prepare a draft that was circulated in a timely fashion? He said, yes, we prepared a draft, circulated in a timely fashion. I said, was there an open markup where Members could offer amendments on both sides of the aisle? And he said, yes, there was an open markup. So I want to compliment you.

Now, I want to contrast that to the SCHIP bill. We've had one hearing in the Energy and Commerce Committee in which SCHIP was the focus of Mr. PALLONE's subcommittee. The bill came over the transom last Tuesday night at 11:36 p.m. The markup was scheduled, I believe, at 10 a.m. the next morning. Chairman DINGELL did delay that until 4 o'clock the next afternoon, and then again delayed the actual markup after opening statements a little bit further.

We didn't have any witnesses testify. We didn't have any open process. We didn't have a circulation of a draft. We got a 465-page bill at 11:36 last Tuesday evening. So that's, I mean, I'm in awe of Ms. DELAURO and the way she's operated her subcommittee, and Mr. OBEY and the way he's operating the full appropriations committee, actually using the process. We're not doing that in the Energy and Commerce Committee or the Ways and Means Committee on the SCHIP bill.